

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-7 are pending. Claims 1-6 are amended. New claim 7 is submitted. In addition, a replacement abstract is provided to obviate the objection in the Office Action.

The Office Action objects to the drawings as referring to elements 8a and 10a which are allegedly not referenced in the specification. However, the third line from the end of paragraph 0025 refers to element 10a, and the last line of paragraph 0025 refers to element 8a. Accordingly, it is submitted that the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

The Office Action also rejects claims 1-4 as anticipated by Funahashi et al. Although not identified in the beginning of paragraph 4 of the Office Action, apparently claims 5 and 6 are also included in the anticipation rejection. For the reasons set forth in detail below, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance.

In accordance with the present invention, an advantageous emission control arrangement is provided. By way of example, and not to be construed as limiting, as shown in the drawings of the present application, an inner shell 8 is formed with a tapered portion 8b to provide a reduced insertion clearance C. Further, inwardly or more deeply in the insertion direction (figure 4), the inner shell 8 includes a small diameter portion 8c. In addition, sealing and cushioning materials are fitted over an outer peripheral surface on an inward end of the cartridge shell such that they are held in a clamped manner between the filter cartridge and the small-diameter portion of the inner shell.

The Office Action refers to guide ring 23 as a tapered portion, however, as set forth in the present claims, (1) the tapered portion is part of the inner shell, (2) inward of the tapered portion a small diameter portion is provided (at a greater depth than the tapered portion), and (3) the sealing and cushioning materials are disposed between the small diameter portion of the inner shell and the filter cartridge.

With an arrangement as disclosed in Funahashi, the deepest end part of the cartridge shell is press-fit into the tip of the guide ring 23. Such an arrangement can be problematic for number of reasons. For example, such an arrangement can be difficult to easily insert without damage to the cartridge and/or disturbing of the materials between the cartridge and the inner shell (such as the cushioning materials). Further, if the cushioning materials should become stuck between the cartridge and the tip of the guide ring, the arrangement could become jammed resulting in being poorly positioned or making removal difficult. In addition, such an arrangement can risk difficulties in the transmission of vibrations to the inner shell through the guide ring.

In addition to the deficiencies mentioned above, Funahashi can provide a difficult or awkward arrangement in terms of positioning of the cushioning materials between stopper ring 24 and guide ring 23.

It is respectfully submitted that the guide ring 23 of Funahashi does not correspond to the tapered portion as set forth in claim 1, because claim 1 recites that the tapered portion is a tapered portion of the inner shell, and further, claim 1 also recites that a small-diameter portion is disposed inwardly (deeper) of the tapered portion, and that the sealing and cushioning materials are positioned between the filter cartridge and the small diameter portion. Further, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to recognize the combined features of the present invention as a modification of Funahashi nor does the prior art recognize the advantages achieved by the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Further, it is submitted that the dependent claims recite additional features which are not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, particularly in combination with the features of claim 1. For example, claim 2 recites first and second stoppers, with the second stopper

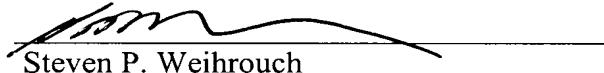
separate from the tapered portion and positioned inward of said tapered portion so as to be at a greater depth than the tapered portion. Thus, claim 2 makes further clear that the second stopper is separate from the tapered portion of the inner casing (see, e.g., inner casing 8 and stopper 23 in the present application). Further, new claim 7 recites that a stopper ring is provided which is separate from the inner shell, with the stopper ring radially inside of the inner shell, and further, with the stopper ring spaced inwardly from the tapered portion so as to be at a depth greater than the tapered portion. Such an arrangement is not disclosed or suggested by Funahashi.

For the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance for claims 1-7 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, he or she is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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